

MEMBERS' REPRESENTATIONAL ALLOWANCE

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General

When an expense is incurred, the Member must determine the primary purpose for the expenditure. Is the primary purpose for the expenditure official and representational? Or is it primarily related to personal, political, campaign, or committee activities? Only expenses the primary purpose of which are official and representational and which are incurred in accordance with the Handbook are reimbursable.

1. The MRA may only be used for official and representational expenses.
2. A Member may expend personal funds in support of his official and representational duties.
3. The MRA may not be used to pay for any expenses related to activities or events which are primarily social in nature.
4. The MRA may not pay for personal expenses.
5. The MRA may not pay for campaign expenses.
6. The MRA may not pay for political expenses.
7. The MRA may not pay for committee expenses.
8. Committee resources may not pay for a Member's official and representational expenses.
9. Campaign funds may not pay for a Member's official and representational expenses.
10. A Member may not maintain, or have maintained for his use, an unofficial office account for the purpose of defraying or reimbursing ordinary and necessary expenses incurred in support of a Member's official and representational duties.

11. A Member may not accept from any private source in kind support having monetary value for an official activity.
12. Only appropriated funds, not personal or unofficial funds, may be used to pay for mail sent under the frank.
13. Each Member is personally responsible for the payment of any official and representational expenses incurred that exceed the provided MRA or that are incurred but are not reimbursable under these regulations.
14. Unless specifically authorized by an applicable provision of federal law, House Rules, or Committee Regulations, no Member, relative of the Member, or anyone with whom the Member has a professional or legal relationship may directly benefit from the expenditure of the MRA.
15. The MRA is available for services provided and expenses incurred from January 3 of one year through January 2 of the following year. All expenses incurred will be charged to the allowance available on the date the services were provided or the expenses were incurred.
16. The MRA is not transferable between years.
17. Requests to obligate prior year's funds after January 2 of the succeeding year will be considered by the Committee when a Member provides documentation demonstrating a bona fide intent to obligate the prior year's funds during the applicable year.

Budgeting and Disclosure

The Committee recommends that each Member establish an annual budget for the MRA. To assist in this process, the Office of Finance sends each Member monthly statements showing year-to-date expenditures and obligated amounts. The quarterly expenditures reflected in these statements are compiled and published as the Quarterly Statement of Disbursements, which is a public document.

Disbursements

Disbursements from the MRA are made on a reimbursable or direct payment basis and require specific documentation and Member certification as to accuracy and compliance with applicable federal laws, House Rules, and Committee Regulations.

Reimbursements and payments from the MRA may be made only to the Member, the Member's employees, or a vendor providing services to support the operation of the Member's offices.

See Disbursements (42).

Incidental Use

Incidental personal use of equipment and supplies owned or leased by, or the cost of which is reimbursed by, the House of Representatives is permitted only when such use is negligible in nature, frequency, time consumed, and expense.

For example, limited use of government resources to access the Internet, to send or receive personal e-mail, or to make personal phone calls is permissible, so long as the use meets the above criteria, and otherwise conforms with the Regulations of the Committee on House Administration and the Code of Official Conduct (House Rule XXIV).

A Member office may adopt a more restrictive incidental use policy.

Overspending

Each member is personally responsible for the payment of any official and representational expenses incurred that exceed the provided MRA. If a Member incurs an obligation to the U.S. House of Representatives and the amount of the obligation incurred exceeds the MRA, the Member shall pay the obligation from personal funds. If the Member fails to pay the obligation voluntarily, the CAO will deduct the amount owed from any pay, mileage, or expense money due to the Member in the case of a sitting Member or through an administrative offset or legal action in the case of a former Member. The Office of Finance will notify a Member if that Member is projected to overspend the MRA.

Contact the Office of Finance at x57474 or the Committee on House Administration at x58281 for assistance with accounting and budgeting.

Telecommuting

Ordinary and necessary telecommuting expenses incurred in compliance with the Committee on House Administration telecommuting policy are reimbursable. Offices may obtain a copy of the Telecommuting policy and agreement by [clicking here](#).

MEMBER'S HANDBOOK

STAFF

OFFICIAL & REPRESENTATIONAL EXPENSES

